

Shape Our Fremont

Where Fremont residents can learn about shaping proposed housing developments...

Projects to Watch

Not all development projects involve housing, and some may not happen for a long time. Here are three long-term projects that residents should be watching.

Irvington BART Station

On March 21, the Fremont City Council approved spending \$1.9 million of Alameda County Measure BB funding to prepare an updated site and station study and environmental impact report for the proposed Irvington BART station near the intersection of Washington Boulevard and Osgood Road. This study and report may take up to two years, and the Council will have to approve any specific construction plans for a station.

The feasibility of placing the Irvington BART station so close to the Warm Springs BART station has been questioned by many people. BART is not providing any funding, so most of the money for the construction of the station will have to come from Measure BB.

So why does the City want to build the station? It appears one reason for moving ahead with the project is to have a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Area of high-density apartments and condominiums that helps Fremont meet California's mandate to provide affordable housing for all income levels. The fact that Osgood and Washington are heavily traveled traffic corridors, and that the closest schools, goods, and services for future residents of the area are too far to reach by walking, makes some people wonder if this project is really a good idea.

In response to a question about whether we should be building the housing first, and the station second, one answer was that residents could be bussed from the Osgood corridor to the other two BART stations in the interim. Although that seemed to satisfy some City Councilmembers, others remained skeptical. This is definitely a project to watch in the future.

East-West Connector

A long, long time ago, there was a plan to build a freeway between I-680 in Fremont to I-580 in Hayward. The route would have roughly followed a north-south path parallel to Mission Boulevard, and there was to be an east-west connector between I-880 and Mission Boulevard parallel to Decoto Road. Both the freeway and the connector plans died, and most of the land was either sold or reverted to other owners -- most of the land, that is, but not all.

A swath of empty land east of Paseo Padre Parkway in Fremont and south of Decoto Road in Union City is currently under consideration for the route of a multi-lane bypass to carry traffic from Mission Boulevard and Union City's BART Station District to the Dumbarton Bridge approach at I-880. Decoto Road in Fremont would be widened, as would a portion of Paseo Padre.

The project, known as the East-West Connector (EWC), was estimated to cost about \$230 million in 2013 and would be funded by a combination of local, county, regional, and state funds with possibly some help from Alameda County Measure BB. It would include a six-lane

bridge across Alameda Creek between Decoto Road and Isherwood Way, as well as multi-lane underpasses under Niles Boulevard, the BART tracks, and the Union Pacific tracks along the Fremont-Union City border.

Union City likes the idea, but many Fremont residents do not. The biggest objection is that it is an expensive project whose primary purpose is to divert Union City's traffic onto Fremont's streets. It also encourages Dumbarton Bridge commuters to cut straight through Fremont to Niles and Niles Canyon rather than use I-880/I-580 to reach Livermore, Tracy, and beyond. Other problems include a significant increase in traffic noise and exhaust fumes at homes along the route, including one potential school site.

To learn more about this project, go to www.RethinkEWC.org

Mission Clay Products

And finally, the Fremont City Council recently denied an appeal regarding bonding for the cleanup of the former Mission Clay Products site at 2225 Niles Canyon Road in Niles Canyon. The site, known to generations of Fremont residents as the "Secret Sidewalk," has been abandoned for many years, and the landmark brick chimney has been torn down.

The main point of interest with this project is that the owners want to finish the cleanup because they plan to sell the property. No development plan was mentioned, but the most profitable would likely be more housing. The property is currently designated as Open Space on the Fremont General Plan, so any future housing development would require a General Plan Amendment. The site is also under the Niles Canyon Scenic Corridor Protection Plan, so any development of any kind would require approval by several other agencies and authorities.

To learn more about all housing developments and related issues in Fremont, go to www.ShapeOurFremont.com